

Taking a trip down design memory lane

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Designers not immune to decorating mishaps

When HGTV announced plans to team up all six of the *Brady Bunch* siblings with its design all-stars to transform the famous ranch home that provided the 1970s-era show's exterior shots for a new series, *A Very Brady Renovation* promised a trip down memory lane that included groovy design trends like orange laminate countertops.

Of course, that begged the question: What are some of the worst design trends of the last decades? Turns out, electronics manufacturer Samsung wanted to know too, commissioning a survey of home design disasters to mark last year's launch of TVs featuring technology that enables the TV to blend seamlessly into the home environment — thereby eliminating at least one home décor headache: a large, ugly blank screen.

Toilet rugs and furry toilet seat covers, taxidermy and avocado-coloured bathrooms were crowned the biggest furnishing fails of the past 50 years. Some of our favourite designers accepted our invitation to comment on the trends.



JO ALCORN

Founder and principal designer of Alcorn Home and Jo Alcorn Designs

"We had oversized pink leather recliner sofas when I grew up and



HGTV's *A Very Brady Renovation* series (Mondays 9 p.m.) is helping put the spotlight on past decorating trends.

were the coolest kids on the block. I ended up taking them to my university dorm and they were thrown out a window into a bin after I left."

Alcorn hopes she hasn't been guilty of too many design disasters over the course of her career. "I've never done sponge painting; I've never wrapped fabric around a lampshade with a fabric bow and I've never informed anyone to install carpet in the bathroom."

Only time will tell if any current

trends will one day rank as design fails. "I don't think we'll have as many faux pas as our past decades, though I do wonder if people will question why we brought back teak furniture."



JANE LOCKHART

Principal designer of Jane Lockhart Interior Design, TV personality and author

"OK. Guilty as charged when it comes to painted wall techniques! I still have copies of the book, *Paint a Great Impression* (1996, Benjamin Moore Paints), if anyone is feeling nostalgic. But look what's been updated and on trend: shag carpet, oversized florals, stone cladding, and animal prints! I have a couple of questions: How did conversation pits not make the list and why are we still having to deal with popcorn ceilings?"

of your house. For instance, if you live in an arts/crafts home, then granite, soapstone and shale style stones would be most suitable. Adding glossy white Carrara marble is not going to turn your craftsman home into a modern urban pad."

Wooden mask art also raises Lohnes's design ire. "I have one rule when it comes to purchasing decor items and art while travelling: If it looks good in the hut, leave it in the hut."



ANDREA COLMAN

Principal designer and owner of Fine Finishes Design Inc. and a design lead on HGTV's *Property Brothers*, season six

"Gone are the days of grapevines stenciled on your grandmother's kitchen. Stencils have come a long way, with fresh and innovative designs to mimic wallpaper or tiles. While this can be a DIY application, the attention to detail required for the best results is better left to the professionals." Colman is also glad wallpapers borders have had their time. "I'd much rather see architectural details, such as crown moulding."

Nor is Colman a fan of shag carpeting. "Good design for me has to work for the way you live. Keeping the long pile free from dirt and dust is too much work," she says. "Carpeted walls? Never. I do remember the flocked wallpaper we had growing up. Texture can be achieved with stone, 3D tile, wood panels and, of course, wallpaper like grass cloth, which can give dimension and visual interest to any room."

Stone cladding can add visual interest to a room but be selective in your choice. "There are many bad replicas out there which should be avoided. If a good quality product isn't in the budget, don't do it at all," Colman says. Popcorn ceilings are one of the first things her firm removes when tackling renovations. "Rooms are brighter and reflect more light on the flat surface." And her take on avocado bathrooms? "Let's keep avocado limited to guacamole and smoothies."



KARL LOHNES

Design expert

"I once — and I emphasize once only! — slept in a round bed. It was in Las Vegas and there was also a round mirror attached to the ceiling above the bed. With no edge to ground myself, my body ended up winding around the centre of the bed like the hands of a clock. I woke up the next morning exhausted. My thought was, 'Where would I ever buy round bedsheets?'" he says.

"Stone cladding has always been a popular decorating option. Many homeowners make the mistake of choosing a stone that does not suit the architectural style of the home they live in. The secret is to choose a stone that matches the era of the home

DESIGN DISASTERS

The top 25 worst home horrors from the past 50 years, as identified by a Samsung survey of U.K. home design designers:

- Toilet rugs/furry toilet seat covers
- Taxidermy
- Avocado bathrooms
- Floral 'chintz' furniture
- Waterbeds
- Artex walls and ceilings
- Carpeted bathrooms
- Rag rolled walls
- Tribal carvings, masks and wall hangings
- Stone cladding
- Animal print anything
- Inspirational quote art stenciled on walls
- Carpeted or textured walls
- Beaded curtains
- Living room bars
- Bidets
- Round beds
- Professional family portraits
- Shabby chic anything
- Shag pile carpets
- Wicker furniture indoors
- Wallpaper borders
- Curtain pelmets
- TV cupboards
- Stenciled walls or decals